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C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 001444

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W, INR/AA AND DS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2017

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [NG](#)

SUBJECT: BUS HITS MINE IN THE SOUTH, PROMINENT TUAREGS
KILLED IN THE NORTH

REF: (A) NIAMEY 1418 (B) NIAMEY 1404

Classified By: Donald W. Koran, DCM, reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Bus blown up in the south

¶1. (C) A bus hit a landmine near the southern city of Maradi the morning of December 10. It reportedly left a one meter deep crater in the dirt road. The governor of the region told the Ambassador that it occurred 50 meters outside of town on the road to Dakoro. He said six people were injured, one critically, two seriously, and three slightly. Other reports have three dead. The governor said that there were motorcycle tracks near where the mine went off. He said he did not know who was responsible for laying the mine. Police sources also refrain from speculating who was responsible, but other security forces have privately said it was the MNJ. We had heard that the authorities in Maradi had been planning to hold a rally regarding the situation in the north on December 10.

¶2. (U) Embassy Emergency Action Committee has met to review security procedures in light of the above. Results of that meeting will be reported septel.

¶3. (C) Comment: While the MNJ has threatened to attack targets in the south, it had not clearly done so. (The Foreign Minister has admitted that the MNJ was probably not responsible for the landmine incident at the Dosso fuel storage facility that the GON initially attributed to the MNJ -- reftels.) If the Maradi incident was the work of the MNJ, it would represent a significant change in its area of operations, which might be an attempt to force the GON to redeploy forces from the north to protect the south. If it was not the work of the MNJ, it raises troubling questions about who else may be laying mines.

Prominent Tuaregs killed in the north

¶4. (U) The MNJ website on December 9 claimed that the Nigerien security services killed three civilians around 10:00 p.m. that day on the way from Dirkou to Agadez. The men were identified as being with the Rharous mineral water company. They were reportedly killed some 200 km east of Agadez on a detour off the Dirkou/Agadez road. The bodies are reportedly being brought to Agadez. Security force contacts report that the security forces killed the men

accidentally. They had warned the men not to travel in the area where they were, and when the security forces ran across them later they thought the men were MNJ fighters.

15. (C) Comment: This incident will generate more attention than other cases of alleged extrajudicial killings because the men killed were prominent Tuareg businessmen. It remains to be seen whether the GON will publicly admit to killing the Tuaregs.

ALLEN